

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Christal Calhoun

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Tool Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1201 South Tool Drive

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Tool State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 75143-1967

County Henderson County

Telephone (903) 432-2637 Fax (903) 432-3666

Web site/URL http://www.malakoffisd.org E-mail Christal.Calhoun@malakoffisd.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Randy Perry E-mail Randy.Perry@malakoffisd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Malakoff ISD Tel. (903) 489-1152

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Rick Vieregge
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☐ Urban or large central city
 - ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - ☐ Suburban
 - ☐ Small city or town in a rural area
 - ☒ Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	10	4	10
K	14	19	33
1	16	18	34
2	15	19	34
3	22	14	36
4	14	11	25
5	16	13	29
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	107	98	205

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 37%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	33
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	44
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	77
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	207
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.372
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	37

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
6 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 80 %
Total number students who qualify: 159

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
24 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	16
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals	5
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 12:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

To ignite within children a lifelong desire for academic success, while fostering a positive learning environment that enables them to reach their full potential with dignity.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Tool Elementary School (TES) is a Pre K – 5th grade campus of approximately 213 students in the city of Tool, Texas. Tool is a small community located on Cedar Creek Lake in East Texas with approximately 2,240 citizens with a large number of citizens being retired.

In 1906, the Tool community was formed and operated a three-room school until a fire destroyed it 1938. After the fire, the school consolidated with the existing school in Malakoff. Tool students had to travel approximately sixteen miles by bus for many years.

In 1963, Cedar Creek Lake was built and the Tool community began to see tremendous growth. The community became large enough to support a school and for a portion of the late 70's and early 80's, the community fought for a school on the west side the Lake. In 2004, a facility committee was formed to look at the needs of the district. One of the committee's findings was that students on the west side of the district were spending too much time traveling to and from school. It was recommended that an elementary school be built on that side of the district.

Tool Elementary opened in 2007 with approximately 30 staff and a student enrollment of 234. By 2012, the school built an extension that added an additional six classrooms on campus including science labs.

Today, Tool Elementary School's student population is approximately 80% economically disadvantaged with a mobility rate of approximately 30%. Because of these challenges, Tool Elementary places a priority on meeting the physical and emotional needs of all its students. Every student at TES receives free breakfast and lunch but a growing concern for the students and their lives away from school resulted in a partnership with the community. The community developed a local food pantry and once a week, approximately 20 "Friday Food Sacks" are delivered to the school to be sent home with students for weekend needs. This same organization contributes to the campus' clothes closet. The closet provides for the physical needs of the students by providing clothes, coats, shoes and other needs.

Students who have an emotional and educational need meet twice a week with a mentor through the campus outreach program. Retired community members are invited to mentor students who are in need of a one-on-one relationship. A mentor listens and assists the student with reading, completing assignments and helping in academic areas where they might be struggling.

A large part of the campus' success happens due to hours of planning and preparing for student's individual academic needs. Twice during each six week grading period, grade level teachers meet with the principal to look over data from classroom performance and to develop individual plans for each student. TES has the luxury of a small student teacher ratio of 12 to 1 which allows the staff to plan for each individual student. Grade level meetings require the classroom teacher to keep a record of parental contact, attendance at after-school tutorials and content mastery attendance logs. Once the student's individual plan is created, it is reviewed to determine if adequate exposure to interventions has been included so that future progress goals can be set. The reading intervention program provides small group instruction for struggling readers daily. After school tutoring is provided for students in grades 3rd, 4th and 5th. Tutoring groups are formed by the teachers using data from formal and informal assessments to organize the students in small groups that are focused on targeting identified deficiencies. Staying focused on small group instruction and individual goals have provided TES a state wide distinction designation as a Top 25% Closing Performance Gaps for 2013, 2014 and 2015.

TES has a morning meeting every day of the week. The staff and students attend and the principal leads the meeting with encouraging stories of success and hard work. These meetings are used to educate the students about the many cultures in our society by celebrating Black History Month and Cinco de Mayo. All students have an opportunity to be recognized for meeting individual academic goals and great character choices. Once a student is recognized they put their name on the campus "WOW" wall. The "WOW" wall is used as a bragging right for a job well done.

Every year, during the month of October, Tool Elementary has Grab N' Go READ NIGHT. The purpose of this event is to promote reading at home. Each student is given a grade level book along with a reading assignment for the night. The students come back the next day to share what they enjoyed about their book.

The philosophy at TES is to provide a learning environment which is rich in a variety of opportunities to learn and filled with an amazing climate full of fun. The staff, students and principal along with community are preparing a future generation of productive citizens.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The curriculum for all instruction at Tool Elementary School is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). All core curriculum is enhanced with teacher selected material. Teachers in Pre K through 5th grade create lesson plans with a focus on stations, cooperative learning strategies, technology and vocabulary assistance throughout the curriculum. TEKS are reviewed to provide understanding and clarity to the teaching process by supplying structural support for the data collected through universal screeners conducted every nine weeks. The curriculum alignment is completed both horizontally and vertically to ensure continuity in all areas. In each grade level, the teachers assess whether the presented lessons are aligned so as to best scaffold student learning and allow for appropriate building of concepts. Informal assessment in all core curriculum is used to measure progress and drive instruction.

Reading instruction focuses on active student involvement with the text in order to make connections and strengthen comprehension. It is a goal to inspire students to love everything about reading. Tool Elementary staff uses technology, one-on-one reading time with the teacher, book clubs, reading incentives and awards to inspire every student to read. Tool Elementary also supplements its reading program with a strong commitment to writing. The belief on campus is that writing supports reading and reading supports writing. Journaling and model writing is used in every classroom.

The reading curriculum emphasizes foundational skills in the lower grades K-2 by providing detailed fluency building strategies. The goal for each student is 64 words per minute for first grade, 90-100 words per minute for second grade and 100 -120 words per minute for third grade. Fluency and comprehension is emphasized in the upper grades 3-5. Tool Elementary uses district-wide basal readers along with leveled readers and campus-wide vocabulary programs to assist students growing need for vocabulary. Each student, through diagnostic assessment, is assigned to a guided reading group to improve fluency and comprehension at his/her instructional level, and whole group instruction is used to teach specific skills and comprehension.

The math curriculum was chosen because it provides a differentiated lesson for each standard. It involves helping students develop a conceptual understanding of math concepts. Numerous modes of instruction and tasks at varied levels are provided with diagnostic assessments for individual skills. Small groups are formed from the assessment data to provide for hands-on experiences and understanding of the mathematical process. A quick review and remediation for struggling students is consistent throughout the math curriculum. This data is also used to provide enrichment of skills during grade level intervention times. The multiple components of this curriculum provide for the diversity needed to provide effective instruction to all students.

In Science, Tool Elementary utilizes an adopted text chosen because it utilizes virtual labs. These labs focus on teaching the scientific method, lab safety, healthy foods and personal care. The virtual labs also provide an avenue for students in need of review. The science curriculum involves an extensive use of vocabulary exercises with the use of a science journal. The campus has two science labs to enrich the learning experiences of all students. Project based learning brings added enrichment with hatching chickens and blooming plants. An increased number of expository science books have been added to the library, encouraging independent science discovery. Each year, Tool Elementary has a campus wide science fair to encourage science discovery.

State adopted materials are used to align the social studies with the TEKS. The foundation skills of history, economics and geography are taught through reading materials and a periodical newspaper. Leveled readers are used to provide an independent learning experience with differentiated learning through our reading curriculum. The teachers have taken the curriculum and integrated it with their math and reading curriculums to provide opportunities for students to make cross-curricular connections throughout the year.

Students in need of academic acceleration are involved in the Gifted and Talented program incorporating the core curriculum with enrichment experiences. In addition to the GT pullout program, students can take part in a variety of school enrichment activities such as UIL, and music. Students in need of academic remediation are offered assistance during and after the school day using a variety of different programs and instructional practices.

TES offers a Pre-K class for four year olds. The curriculum is aligned with the Kindergarten TEKS. It includes academic, listening, social interaction and communication skills. This curriculum gives each individual student the tools to be ready academically, physically and mentally for kindergarten. The students learn by exploring and manipulating activities with a focus on motor skills. The beginning stages of stations are set up for technology, hands on and group interaction. The breakfast and lunch time provides a family setting so the teacher can provide guidance on nutrition and fine motor skills. In 2013, the Pre-K program received the Pre-K Center of Excellence award.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

To help students become better-rounded, instruction in art, music, technology and physical education are offered. All curriculum in these areas follow the standards set forth in the state required TEKS. The goal of the program is to offer students a variety of educational experiences.

All students in grades Kindergarten through 5th receive three, fifty minute classes of physical education each week. The state standards are used as the foundation. The school's philosophy is that a large part of a child's academic success comes from a strong physical fitness program. The physical education department participates in the Fitnessgram each year which assesses each child's physical fitness. Parents are given a summary of their child's results with suggestions on healthy habits. Physical education is a great way for students to become motivated and connect with peers while also developing a healthy lifestyle. The physical education department also participates in Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH), which provides education on the benefits of proper nutrition and physical fitness. Another program offered through the physical education department is VOICE, which promotes healthy living skills, including how to avoid substance abuse and how best to make friends and keep them. The campus' Pre-K program is half day with physical education TEKS being covered within the classroom and during play time. Pre- K also participates in CATCH and VOICE activities each year.

Students rotate through music, art and computer lab each week during a fifty minute block. The art program at Tool Elementary is closely tied to the core curriculum taught in each classroom. Each teacher incorporates a variety of art experiences in their lessons. Participation in various content-related poster contests throughout the year provides all students with opportunities to artistically express their creativity. The campus holds an art competition for 5th graders that challenges them to paint a picture of the school. The winner's painting is displayed prominently in the school. Each year, Tool Elementary commissions a local artist to come on campus and teach an art class on using pastels. Foundational art skills are emphasized by the artist. The students love the lessons and create their own masterpieces based on the instruction received from the artist.

The music classes involve listening, singing, playing instruments and moving to the music. They learn about aspects of music such as tempo, pitch and rhythm. The students utilize the skills learned in performing at a very popular Veterans Day program from grades 3rd, 4th and 5th and a Christmas program from grades K, 1st and 2nd grade. Both of these programs are performed for the school and community. The Veterans Day program provides a memorable moment for students with acknowledgment of local war heroes being honored through song. The Christmas program is new every year with skits, talent and traditional music. The highlight of the music program is a talent show at the end of the year where students perform in song and dance. Pre-K enjoys instrumental play along with nursery songs to encourage poetry. Kindergarten opens every morning with music about the days of the week, months of year and character building songs.

Students in Pre-K through 5th grade receive technology instruction based on state standards not only in the school's computer lab, but also within their classrooms. The TEKS Technology Applications expectations are taught to all K-5 students. Through teaching of the Technology Applications students have learned to

produce short powerpoint presentations explaining math processes and science experiments. The computer lab has 28 internet connected student computers and one interactive whiteboard. Computer classes focus on introducing Pre-K and Kindergarten to the computer and advances into keyboarding skills and individual lessons for 1st – 5th grade students. With the use of technology-driven-curriculum software, students can experience real-world scientific research and experiments. Students learn how to conduct research in the lab. It also provides a venue for struggling students. Many of the adopted texts used on campus come with virtual lessons and labs that allow our students to participate in a review lesson in the computer lab before heading back to class. All students have access to interactive boards, tablets and laptops along with projectors and Wi-Fi for whole class instruction or individual work time.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

TES uses a state adopted curriculum for the core subjects. Teachers are given the choice on how they provide instruction and assessment. Instructional methods consist of hands-on learning with the use of cooperative learning, manipulatives, technology and small group instruction. Cooperative learning has shown to assist both above and below level students in their ability to master a concept. Teachers meet regularly in grade level meetings to research and share different teaching strategies to improve teaching and instruction. In grades 2nd–5th, teachers present a progressive assignment in class that encourages students to increase their knowledge by use of research, technology and project based learning activities throughout the year. Project based learning allows above level students to think at a higher level and solve problems differently than found in traditional lessons. TES strives to provide hands-on activities while making real world connections to their learning. Technology has played an important role in our rigorous lesson plans and also exposes the world outside of our rural community. For small group instruction, the school enables the use of a Content Mastery classroom which consists of a certified teacher who can help students with any subject throughout the day.

Grades K-2nd have an uninterrupted 90 minute reading block in which students experience individual and small group learning by utilizing reading stations. These stations lay an important academic foundation in developing reading skills and play a large role in the success that the school experiences with reading and writing in the upper grades.

Three times a year, students in grades K-2nd are screened by using the Texas Primary Reading Inventory. Using the data gathered from the inventory, the staff creates reading intervention groups and identifies those students who need upper level enrichment. This diagnostic instrument also assists teachers in planning for individual student needs.

Tool Elementary also uses a universal screener three times a year for math and reading in grades K-5. This screener is used for RtI, which provides a three-tier model approach for working with students struggling academically. Like all other lessons, math lessons are aligned with the Texas Essential of Knowledge and Skills. Math lessons consist of a warm-up, a review of what students already know and a lesson over a new topic. If a student is not successful on a math assignment, the teacher can re-teach the lesson or send the student to Content Mastery for one-on-one assistance.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

TES instruction is driven by review and analysis of data. The belief of the campus is that this process is responsible for its success and is worth the time and effort that it takes to look deep into the learning process of each individual student.

During each grading period, through both formal and informal assessments in all subject areas, data analysis is used to determine students' strengths and weaknesses. These results in an instructional plan developed for each student. The teacher uses this plan in all subject areas to provide differentiated instruction in the classroom.

Team members discuss the student as a whole by looking at past and present performance and develop individual instructional plans to help ensure student success. Each student receives a three weeks progress

report and a six weeks report card. Student progress is communicated to parents through an online Parent Portal on the district's website that allows parents to check current student grades and assignments. Parent meetings are held regularly to keep communication open throughout the school year. Informal communication is used with the community and parents through the district's website and local media.

Student classroom performance, assessment data and teacher reports are reviewed and discussed at an RtI meeting that consists of the grade level teacher, RtI specialist, special education teacher, reading and math interventionists and campus principal. The goal of the meeting is to establish a plan for students who are identified as working below grade level. Supportive curriculum and strategic methods are identified that would give the student additional practice for a given objective.

The Tier III Model is used after students have been identified in need of intervention. Tier I involves the classroom teacher providing intervention. Tier II continues intervention using trained intervention staff. Tier III provides extra testing to ensure student success.

Data is used to assess the need for systematic changes and professional development. The principal examines data consistently to determine instructional areas where teachers might need additional support or training. Benchmarks and the STAAR tests are given in grades 3rd-5th.

TES has had success in closing performance gaps. In fact, the school earned a statewide distinction for closing performance gaps for the last three years. Because the school is high performing, the campus leadership and staff maintain high expectations for students and closely monitor performance data throughout the year. If performance data begins to show growing gaps, the team meets to plan interventions and develop different instruction to meet the needs of all students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students are greeted at the door with a smile and good morning from several staff members. Car riders have their doors opened as if they have arrived at a retreat, while bus riders are greeted as they exit the bus ready to eat breakfast and head off to the morning meeting. The morning meeting connects the entire campus and prepares both students and staff for the day. The campus feels that attention to the emotional and social development of the students is promoted through individual recognition by staff during these morning meetings. The school day ends just as strong, with teachers and staff reminding students about projects and assignments before they leave with a smile and a wave as the bus or car drives off until the next morning.

To promote a strong sense of unity throughout the campus, a new theme is adopted each year that aligns the school's goals, attitude and day-to-day functionality. This year the theme is Superheroes. The campus displays an "Incredible Work Wall" where students get to show off excellence. Each six weeks, a student from each class is chosen as a winner of the "Super Tiger Award". The chosen students are given a "Super Tiger Cape" to wear and their picture is put in the local newspaper. Teachers have total control over this award. During the award ceremony, they give a brief speech about the student chosen and what the student did to earn the honor. The school year consists of dancing as an entire campus, usually on Fridays. Fabulous Fridays take place once every six weeks. In an effort to enhance their social development, student's names are collected each six weeks for exemplary character choices. Students who have their names submitted have a chance to compete in healthy competitions while being cheered on by the student body.

Parents, community, local businesses and area churches all support the campus throughout the year. The principal takes on the task of giving spirit-filled awards during staff meetings and staff doorways are garnished with personal hand written notes of admiration. Teachers feel valued and appreciated by Malakoff I.S.D., from the school board down through the chain of command in administration. Teachers' salaries are some of the highest in the region. Teachers, staff and the administrator on the TES campus have a close, personal relationship that is afforded by a small campus.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Tool Elementary has numerous events and organizations where parents and community members are involved. The campus has a student population that is approximately 80% economically disadvantaged. The relationship with area churches and organizations are crucial to student success. Every Monday after school, a local organization sponsors a program for students in K – 5th grade. The students receive a snack, positive guidance and social interaction activities. As a campus, understanding the many non-academic needs of its students, is important. Tool Elementary has learned that the best way to help students meet those needs requires an outside support system.

Every Friday afternoon, about 20 students receive a food sack that they can take home over the weekend. The staff at Tool Elementary is responsible for recommending students and families who might be in need of this program. The family is contacted and given an opportunity to accept or deny the service.

The campus also provides a clothes closet that is fully sponsored by area churches and includes seasonal clothes, shoes, undergarments and more. Every year, before the school year starts, the community provides a large number of donations including school supplies and clothes for students in need. A large part of starting the school year involves an outreach committee that determines what students need, and the type of donations that should be requested.

The campus is open every morning for parents and grandparents to attend the morning meetings. Parents and grandparents attend a six weeks awards ceremony that celebrates student achievements. A separate end-of-year awards ceremony is sponsored by local organizations and the campus parent teacher organization. Bicycles are awarded to students with perfect attendance, medals are given for high achieving

students. T-shirts and ribbons are awarded to all students.

Tool Elementary holds a science fair at the end of each school year. Students in grades K-5th are encouraged to participate. The fair is set up for the campus and community to tour throughout the week. The contest is conducted through grade levels with one overall winner.

Twice a year the school offers a music program consisting of a Veterans Day and Christmas program. The community enjoys the programs and the local VFW post gets involved in helping with the Veterans program.

Every year, the campus partners with a local restaurant to promote a family night. Students and their families come to the restaurant to eat with the staff of Tool Elementary. The proceeds from this night support multiple incentive drawings for technology and gift baskets.

3. Professional Development:

Students at Tool Elementary need a well rounded staff that is full of energy and ready and willing to get the job done. Every year, the principal of TES holds a staff retreat before time the start of the school year. The principal plans the entire day; including the location, schedule, activities and staff development. Approximately two weeks before the staff reports to work, invitations are mailed with a hint about the new school year theme imbedded inside. On the day of the retreat, all of the staff arrive at the school and load on the bus with their destination unknown. A superhero theme brought on a superhero outfit for each staff member created by the principal along with a superhero name. The schedule for the day always includes building relationships and taking care of business. This one day is pivotal in establishing a school year full of energy and positivity.

At the beginning of the school year every staff member receives a campus calendar that includes dates for staff and grade level meetings. The grade level meetings are led by the campus principal and cover cooperative learning strategies and interpretation of data every three weeks. Using the data, an intervention plan designed to meet the needs of each student is developed. By following the alignment of the TEKS, the plan for instruction is concise and uniform throughout the campus. Our staff meetings keep everyone united as one and informed about what others in the building are achieving. The staff meetings are led by the principal and each staff member is encouraged to share something unique that is happening in their room.

“Get Your Groove Back” is a week devoted to teachers, giving each an opportunity to sign up and observe other teachers on campus. The principal provides the time and develops the schedule according to the need. During the observation, teachers fill out a form highlighting ideas learned and what was enjoyed the most about the lesson they observed.

A needs assessment is conducted each year to identify the type of staff development needed on the campus. With the campus principal’s approval, the district allows teachers to choose from a variety of workshops and conferences for their three days of district required professional development. The district also does a great job offering professional development at locations within or near the district.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership at Tool Elementary encourages a family environment by acknowledging everyone’s role in the success of the campus. The principal loves her job and this is evident by her hands on interaction with students and staff. She is a person of passion and dedication who inspires others with her enthusiasm, which spreads across the campus. The principal is an innovative leader by implementing new ideas and she brings the entire campus together to achieve common goals. She molds young inexperienced teachers into confident accomplished professionals.

The principal takes a positive approach to making her staff better at what they do. She supports and nurtures her staff through monthly grade level meetings, staff meetings, staff celebrations as well as one-on-one conferences. The goal of the principal is to make it to every classroom every day and most days, she

accomplishes that goal. The principal builds outside relationships with community members and parents because she views her position as a means to serve others. The community recognizes the campus as an opportunity for outreach and the relationship between the principal and community leaders has fostered the availability of many important services for our students and parents. Understanding the importance of meeting the individual needs of students contributes to their success in learning as well.

Students always have a chance to be acknowledged for accomplishing goals, making good choices and improving academically. Perfect attendance is a great opportunity for the principal to dress up as a granny and throw a dance party to celebrate. Academic success is measured each six weeks and students are acknowledged at our awards ceremony. Students love to show the principal their work, meet with her about academic and behavioral goals and publish their work outside her office door. The actions of the campus principal consistently encourage, motivate and unite the students and staff.

The leadership in the school consists of one principal with a great support staff that includes a testing coordinator/counselor, RtI team, reading intervention team, content mastery teacher, and lead teachers for each grade level. The principal works closely with the superintendent, assistant superintendent and director of curriculum and classroom technology. The support of the administration at Malakoff ISD allows Tool Elementary to develop new ideas and reach students at another level. The support from the district administration team centers on the philosophy of believing in the ability of the leadership team to make site-based decisions.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Tool Elementary considers the majority of its success to come from the daily morning meetings it holds on campus. The morning meetings at TES consist of every student and staff member meeting in the gym to start the morning out right. The students listen as the principal brings the message of the day and the staff is always ready to contribute to the message by recognizing students for great achievement, improvement or displaying excellent manners. The morning meeting is responsible for setting the tone of the day with a focus on what the campus is presently working on, whether it is character building or academic strategies.

Parents, community members and other guest attend the morning meetings to participate in the positive energy this campus provides. Students have an opportunity to be recognized by a staff member during the morning meeting. Once the student is recognized their name goes on the campus “WOW” wall which allows them to participate in a “WOW” party later in the year. The recognition in front of the student body is a celebration, but the party is a bonus. Students often set their own goals and when met they are celebrated during the morning meeting.

When the campus needs to celebrate on a bigger scale, they dance. Every staff member, including the principal and all of the students do a line dance to start the morning off right. The morning meeting climaxes with students pledging to the United States of America and Texas flag followed by a moment of silence and the campus creed, “I am responsible for everything I think, say, do and feel”.

The campus has original presentations by accomplished students and skits by staff to promote positive behavior. A great morning meeting typically involves a healthy competition of math facts, recognition of students for perfect attendance, box tops or accelerated reading points.

Every six weeks the principal holds a Fabulous Friday during the morning meeting where students can be chosen to participate in a game to win a prize. Often students are asked to pick a staff member to help them with the challenge and the students love it. The staff understands students need to have experiences to meet goals such as personal growth and development for future life choices and the morning meetings help Tool Elementary School to meet these goals.